

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

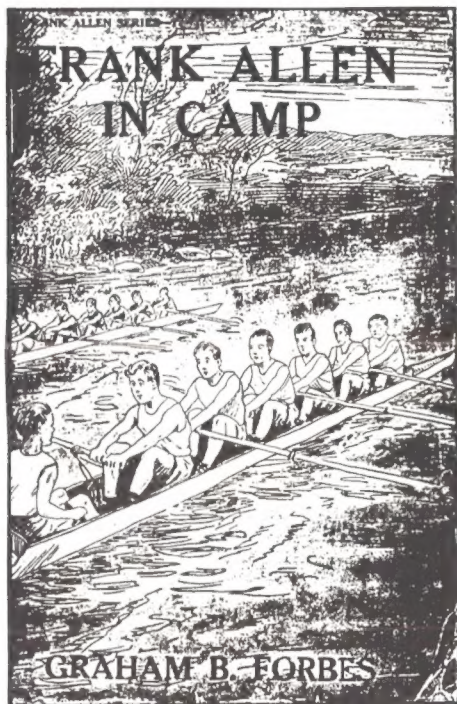
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## THE UNKNOWN PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

By John T. Dizer



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FRANK ALLEN SERIES

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## THE UNKNOWN PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH\*

By John T. Dizer

In his heyday Percy Keese Fitzhugh was one of the most popular writers for young people in America. The kids loved his books and the adults approved of them. His books had action and excitement and were voraciously read by young males. In addition, Fitzhugh was supported and essentially subsidized by the Boy Scouts of America, his books were promoted as being better written than other series books of the times and he had the support of the adult power structure.

As Murray notes in THE HISTORY OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, "The celebrated TOM SLADE books of Percy K. Fitzhugh were developed to counter the TOM SWIFT books. With eighty titles they reached a total of 4,000,000 sold by the publishers."<sup>1</sup> Other sources give sales figures considerably less—1,000,000 to 3,000,000—and we know there were only 19 TOM SLADE titles but Murray shows the intent of the BSA to counter what they felt was poor literature.<sup>2</sup>

The story of Fitzhugh and the BSA has been well documented by many writers.<sup>1-13</sup> In addition to the TOM SLADE series written for the BSA and published by Grosset & Dunlap, Fitzhugh wrote—also for the BSA and G&D—the ROY BLAKEY, PEE-WEE HARRIS, WESTY MARTIN, MARK GILMORE series, and single Boy Scout stories for a total of 67 books, all Scout or Scout-related stories. All were published between 1915 and 1931. From 1931 to 1934 G&D also published the HAL KEENE and SKIPPY DARE series, a total of 13 books. Both series were written by Fitzhugh using Hugh Lloyd as his pen name.

Fitzhugh, we believe, wrote 96 juveniles. G&D published 80 of them and with G&D's huge distribution network, plus the backing of the BSA, these 80 are the books most collectors know about. But, what about the other 16? These books show a different picture of the real Fitzhugh. His jingoism, prejudices and bigotry came as a shock to me, after my youthful blind acceptance of TOM SLADE's heroism and the exploits of the other Bridgeboro Scouts. Fitzhugh's early books include fantasy, history, Boy Scouting and non-boy scouting and are well worth examining. If there seems to be too much fantasy in both the history and the Boy Scout stories perhaps we can accept it as part of Fitzhugh's mind-set.

Fitzhugh's first published works apparently appeared in 1906. We have heard of one Fitzhugh book, the GOLDEN ROD STORY BOOK, which apparently no collector has seen but which may exist. We do not know if or when it was published. We do know that in 1906 McLoughlin Brothers published the six volume YOUNG FOLKS' COLONIAL LIBRARY, by Percy K. Fitzhugh. These books were advertised as "biographical stories of the minor characters in the War for Independence. They are written in a style appealing especially to young people; but the adult will find them authentic as well as interesting reading." The books were: THE STORY OF JOHN PAUL JONES, THE STORY OF ETHAN ALLEN, THE STORY OF ANTHONY WAYNE, THE STORY OF GENERAL JOHANN DE KALB, THE STORY OF GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY, and THE STORY OF GENERAL FRANCIS MARION. They were physically small books and contained only from 63 to 95 pages. Each had a colorful frontispiece and illustrations. As histories go, the basic facts are probably as accurate as most juvenile histories although the books are quite flamboyant and obviously aimed for a young audience. They are shy on details and balanced historical

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judgment and strong on stereotypes and personal prejudices. Several of the books bring in, for some odd reason, (perhaps to flesh out the book or just to entertain the reader) stories of witchcraft, ghosts and phantoms. Rather than accept my value judgments let us look at the books:

"...there lived in Prussia a famous thief who is known in history as Frederick the Great." (Montgomery, p. 9) "It seems scarcely possible that one little man, like Frederick the Great, could have caused such an endless amount of trouble in the world, but it is an illustration of how many bad things a man can do and how much misery and bloodshed he can cause, if he sets about it with all his heart." (De Kalb, p. 10) "Frederick the Great had gone home to his luxuriant castle to write poems and play the flute, for if he could not make people miserable in one way he was sure to do it in another." (De Kalb, p. 11) Fitzhugh not only didn't like Frederick, he didn't like Frederick's poetry or music either! And he didn't like Hessian soldiers. "These hired foreigners who had no interest in the war but for the money they received were the cruellest soldiers in the whole army of Great Britain." (Wayne, p. 19) The French "are so delicate and artistic in everything they do." (De Kalb, p. 21) "...the encroachments of the wily French in Canada." (Montgomery, p. 26) and "But being a French Huguenot, nobody pays any attention to him, least wise those as comes from France." (Jones, p. 21) make one suspect Fitzhugh was no lover of the French. When New York claimed Vermont and attempted to evict the New Hampshire settlers, "New Hampshire protested...but she was powerless before the great rich colony and the greedy tyrant who governed it, [Governor Tryon] and the surveyors from New York began to do their work and the sheriffs served their imperial writs and the disgraceful work went on." (Allen, p. 23) "...the Royal Governor of New York...went on cutting up Vermont like a modern land boom company, and paying his debts with it, and disposing of it in a spirit of splendid liberality." (Allen, p. 26) Fitzhugh didn't like New York Staters either, apparently, although we Vermonters might say he was mild and factual! As for the English, "George the Third, [was] the weakest and most foolish king that ever sat upon a throne." (Montgomery, p. 52) The British soldiers at Fort Ticonderoga weren't much better. "Many were the shouts from boisterous, drunken officers, that echoed through the strong old fort, and loud and merry were the songs and laughter that were heard there. The gay young soldiers, in their spotless uniforms, who made the nights noisy with their reckless jollity, felt secure within its ancient portals." (Allen, p. 38) And as for the British military in New York City, oh my! "Here they settled down to social pleasures, the officers gambling on a large scale and the privates gambling on a small scale; and they danced and sang and drank toasts and were exceeding merry." (Wayne, p. 37) And look at the Dutch. "I should not be at all surprised if grouchy old Peter Stuyvesant haunted the place with his wooden leg—or some other dreadful old Dutch burgher." (Montgomery, p. 87) Indians and Blacks don't fare too well either. "...loiterers and one or two lazy looking indians and negroes had gathered." (De Kalb, p. 56) "So you can see that this celebrated war [French and Indian] which preceded the Revolution in our country was a sort of blessing in disguise to all concerned, except the hapless and astonished Indians, who were, of course, no consideration one way or the other." (Montgomery, p. 25) And, "The Indians...were still active in their hostilities, and frightful tales of massacre and outrage came in from the great West." (Wayne, p. 92)

What about Girls, another minority? We really don't hear much about them. Baron De Kalb "perceived the fair damsels at the critical period of sweet sixteen, when enticing raiment was most of all to be desired, shorn

of all their treasured and cherished fineries; the jeweled earring, the beruffled petticoat, the silken love-hood, the bewitching stomacher; of everything engaging and alluring except their graceful courtesies, and those were not imported." (De Kalb, p. 51) When Wayne returned from the Indian campaign, "The fair maidens hurled flowers at him as he passed along." (Wayne, p. 93) Other than that girls didn't have much to do with history.

So what did Fitzhugh like? Apparently he thoroughly believed in the manifest destiny of this country, he liked brave men and he liked the Revolutionary War. He was also dramatic and positive about his beliefs. Here are more quotes:

"Up in the grand old commonwealth of Massachusetts, brave men were speaking out brave thoughts that rang through the land, and stirred the good people as they had never been stirred before." (Jones, p. 28) "In those days men inherited their bravery—it ran in families—and most of the intrepid heroes of the Revolution received their courage from their fathers." (Allen, p. 7) When Ethan Allen demanded the surrender of Ticonderoga, "...he held his sword high in the air, and waved it about his head. 'In the name of the Great Jehovah, and the Continental Congress!' he shouted in a voice that made the old walls ring." (Allen, p. 47) And as far as the war itself was concerned,—"And then rang out the shot whose echo lasted seven bloody years, and the grandest and most righteous war that ever has been waged in all the history of this world, was on at last." (Montgomery, p. 60)

These six books are worth exploring in some depth because they show attitudes which appear in varying degrees in Fitzhugh's later books. We find the prejudices, the stereotypes, the firm belief in the manifest destiny of this country, the attitudes towards girls and minorities which appear time and again in Fitzhugh's later works and which, as we look back at them, were obvious in his wartime Boy Scout books.

In 1907 McLoughlin published *THE STORY OF A FIGHT*, "from Concord Bridge to a Field at Yorktown." This was another American history and the author was given as "Hugh Lloyd." It was a much larger book of 225 pages, indexed and with a list of principal battles. It was well illustrated and had an elaborate figure of Liberty in red, white and blue on the cover. It was a pretentious book, apparently written for slightly older youth than the series of the year before. It was equally dramatic in tone.

"...it was there at that wooden crossing which spanned the languid Concord River that the glorious struggle started which ended on a field at Yorktown!" (p. 58) The heroes of the preceding series all appear, leading me to wonder if Fitzhugh had material left over. All the old national myths appear. Betsey Ross, the Boston Massacre, Molly Pitcher, the savagery of the Indians, the nobility of the struggles of the Americans and the brutality of the British are dramatized in a flowery and highly dramatic manner. The good guys fought the bad guys (few girls noted, except Betsey and Molly in cameo appearances), it was all very black and white and, "The surrender of the British at Yorktown was the reward of seven long years of suffering to the patriots who won the freedom of this blessed land and whom we should never cease to honor. It was with this glorious and dramatic climax that the curtain of the great drama fell, and thus ends our Story of a Fight." (p. 225)

In 1908 Fitzhugh wrote both a historical novel *THE GALLEON TREASURE* and a child's fantasy, *KING TIME*. *THE GALLEON TREASURE* was published by Crowell and is the first of Fitzhugh's boy adventures. It takes place in Salem and Boston in 1692 and is an entertaining book once you get past the "forsooths," "vartlets," "struth," and the over-used pseudo-archaic



language. There is adventure, pirates, fighting, witch trials, eke this and mort that and action, action and more action. The historical facts are fair. Cotton Mather is the villain of the book. The style, except for the language, is very similar to Fitzhugh's Scout books which followed in a few years. The book is almost entirely male oriented. The hero's sister is pictured as: "a fair lass, mild and biddable," "frail lass," "a meek-mannered wench," "my sweet sister blushed overmuch me-seemith," and, "shaking her head with a fair pout." She was almost hung as a witch until the Governor of Massachusetts saved her. The girls in later Scout stories weren't much, if any, different except that none of them came that close to hanging.

The other Fitzhugh book of 1908, KING TIME, is completely different. The title page reads:

King Time  
or the  
Mystical Land of the Hours  
A Fantasy  
By P. K. Fitzhugh  
Illustrated By L. J. Bridgman

It is a fantasy about a little boy (young enough that his nurse usually helps him with his buttons) who falls asleep and is taken by an Imp, Mr. Three O'Clock, to see where the hours go. As John Sullivan has pointed out, it has elements of ALICE, WIZARD OF OZ, and GULLIVER.<sup>14</sup> To me it is also reminiscent of some of Baum's other fantasies such as THE MASTER KEY. As was done with OZ, the illustrations are integrated with the text and are an important part of the book. After 33 pages in rhyme the remainder of the book is a mixture of rhyme and prose. The boy and the imp visit the land of Tockerlore and the magical city of Tickerleen and have lots of strange adventures. They hear the legend of the Wollerperleck one verse of which goes:

And the maidens who passed in the evening  
Would incessantly loiter and stand  
By the fence near by, and giggle and sigh,  
And remark, "He is simply grand!"

They meet the imp who saw George Washington chop down the cherry tree and hear other "old hour imps" correct history. The little boy also meets Father Time who sends him as a spy to Duke Procrastinate's camp. After a number of puns and jokes and some time in camp the boy wakes up in front of his father's clock. It is a most unusual and entertaining fantasy, but it tells little about Fitzhugh himself.

Fitzhugh had no known published books between 1908 and 1912, although in 1910 he edited the 10 volume EVERY GIRL'S LIBRARY, A Collection of Appropriate and Instructive Reading for Girls of All Ages from the Best Authors of All Time, published by The Pearson Publishing Co. Fitzhugh apparently provided a "General Introduction," but none of the chapters. Based on Fitzhugh's knowledge of girls, at least as shown in his boys books, he seems an unusual choice for editor. It is interesting to note that EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY, published by the Boy Scouts of America, did not appear until 1913, and Fitzhugh had almost no connection with it.

Fitzhugh's ALONG THE MOHAWK TRAIL appeared in 1912, published by Crowell, his first book on Boy Scouting. It was quite successful, the BSA approved of it, and it was reprinted in the BSA EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY in 1914. It was followed by a series of three other adventure/Scouting books with many of the same characters. These books were: FOR UNCLE SAM, BOSS,

OR BOY SCOUTS AT PANAMA, Crowell, 1913, IN THE PATH OF LA SALLE, OR BOY SCOUTS ON THE MISSISSISSIPPI, Crowell, 1914, and UNCLE SAM'S OUTDOOR MAGIC, Harpers, 1916. These four books are forerunners of, and very similar to, the more famous G&D TOM SLADE et al series. The plots are predictable and the character development is minimal but the books are exciting and the action is generally plausible. The heroics of Fitzhugh's Boy Scouts are only a bit more limited than those of the Ralphson and Payson Scouts. Mathews of the BSA who, in his "Blowing Out the Boys Brains" diatribes, had excoriated the Ralphson, Payson et al Scout books approved of Fitzhugh. Fitzhugh, according to both his son and his friends, was neither a camper nor scout and never served in any capacity with the Boy Scouts of America.<sup>15</sup> His knowledge of Scouting rules was obviously limited since he pictured Scouts as young as 10 years old and also had Scouts salute with their left hand.<sup>16-17</sup> These four books are very entertaining reading and boys could easily ignore small errors. To summarize the action, in ALONG THE MOHAWK TRAIL 18 year old Harry Arnold and 14 year old Gordon Lord, two Scouts from Oakwood, New Jersey, miss the train for a Scout camp located somewhere on the shores of Lake Champlain. They decide to hunt up the camp on their own and do so. It is difficult, partly since the troop has not yet decided where to put the camp. They head north, carrying, along with other Scout gear, a rifle, trap and snares. During their trip, among other activities, they rescue a "ghastly object," (a badly hurt Scout) capture some robbers and recover the loot, find and return a lost reticule (belonging to a 16 year old maiden), save a small boy from drowning and help perfect a rubber band/clockwork motor for model airplanes. They also find their troop and, with Gordon as Ethan Allen and Harry as Seth Warner retake Fort Ticonderoga from another Scout troop. They wind up the summer (and the book) with the small boy who had previously been saved from drowning winning the Oakwood News Aviation Cup with his rubber band/clockwork motor, Gordon receiving the BSA Bronze Medal for saving life and Harry receiving the Golden Cross, highest award in Scouting. It is noted that Dan Swift of the Oakwood Scouts made 1st class. Any connection with the more famous Tom is not mentioned.

In FOR UNCLE SAM, BOSS Harry Lord spends two years working on the Panama Canal. The descriptions of Panama, the locks and conditions of working on the canal are detailed and well done. Fitzhugh also throws in a lot of early history of Panama. This story, too, is strong on patriotism. Harry's boss is Uncle Sam, personified, who can do no wrong. In his two years in Panama Harry survives a landslide, makes an almost fatal trip to Haiti to convince a deserter to return to Panama, and finds the bones and gold hoard of a '49er. In addition he earns the Panama Medal.

UNCLE SAM'S OUTDOOR MAGIC is a story of Bobby Cullen, a poor Bridgeboro New Jersey, boy. Although published in 1916, the action fits between "Uncle Sam" and "La Salle." Bobby's uncle wouldn't let him join the Boy Scouts and, although Roy Blakeley and other Bridgeboro Scouts appeared in the book, Scouting does not play a prominent part. Bobby's uncle and aunt disappeared after a dam broke and Bridgeboro was flooded. Bobby helped the Scouts repair flood damage and became enamored of civil engineering and government reclamation work. Capt. Craig, an Army Engineer, saw his promise and gave him a job in Arizona working on the Roosevelt Dam. The book is largely about Bobby's adventures as a fledgling engineer for Uncle Sam. "Loyalty to the Government is the Keynote of Success..." is again a major emphasis of the book. Bobby performed his duties faithfully although on three occasions he nearly drowned and in a fourth incident he was almost fatally trapped in a well. Fitzhugh included reams of detail on irrigation and the work of the Reclamation and Conservation Service as well



as history about the Indian Cave Dwellers.

Captain Craig also succored Wesley Binford, another fledgling engineer. in IN THE PATH OF LA SALLE and sent him to Montana to "fight the Mississippi river" with the Reclamation Service. Wesley had "borrowed" Harry Arnold's canoe as well as some money, demolished the canoe and decamped from home. Most of the action takes place in Montana. Wesley is injured when he keeps a large boulder from demolishing some homes. He learns a lot about water conservation, erosion and flood control, and eventually saves a village on the Mississippi by showing the natives where to start a river cutoff. He rooms with Bobby Cullen and meets Harry Arnold again when Harry saves his life in a cyclone. Gordon Lord and the rest of the Bridgeport troop end up on the Mississippi with the older boys. The Scout troop and Scoutmaster are armed with revolvers and rifles when they attack what they think are robbers. Their foe turns out to be the older Scouts/engineers in considerable deshabille since they have been fighting a flood. The real robbers are led by a Thomas (alias "Crowbar") Slade and a \$500 reward is posted for his capture. This raises interesting questions since it is believed that the BSA made the TOM SLADE movie in 1913 and revised and reissued it in 1915.<sup>18</sup> Fitzhugh wrote the book TOM SLADE, based on the Boy Scout movie, in 1915 while LA SALLE was copyrighted in 1914 so we have a Tom Slade, hero, and a Tom Slade, villain, at the same time and from the pen of the same author. LA SALLE is the last of the non-G&D Scouting books although the ending leaves the whole group heading into Mexico to make movies and look for more adventure.

These books are exciting, colorful and filled with action. Although three of them are nominally not about Scouting there is a great deal of emphasis on Scouting qualities in all four books. Unfortunately, we also find the same stereotypes we found in the earlier books. Here are quotes: "...if all there was to be done was to dig a ditch...they's send a Swede or a Dago up here to do it." (OUTDOOR MAGIC, p. 121) "Dirty Chinamen and suspicious, frowning Spaniards eyed him..." "People, mostly negroes, lay about, indolent and languid." (UNCLE SAM, p. 83) "Murder, massacre, slavery, treachery, all the cute little Spanish tricks he used..." (UNCLE SAM, p. 230) "I'm in barracks that would make the Panama barracks look like an Alabama coon's chicken-coop. Harry, these greasy Mexicans can't look you straight in the eye." (LA SALLE, pp. 273-4) "They were, indeed, treading the very ground over which that treacherous, bloodthirsty tribe [Mohawks] had once carried their victims to torture and massacre." (LAKE CHAMPLAIN, p. 198) Fitzhugh's ideas about girls hadn't changed much either. "...there rose the clear voice of a girl, 'I wish I was a boy.' Her mother said, 'Did you ever hear of such a thing!'" Gordon Lord, Scout mascot and aged 14 in MOHAWK TRAIL shouted, "there have to be girls for soldiers to say good-b—I mean, farewell—to." "You're supposed to stay here and pine away, comforted Gordon; see?" The girl laughed. "There have to be sisters and sweethearts and things," said Gordon, with great finality; "else what's the use of wars at all?" (LA SALLE, p. 371) Gordon/Fitzhugh was presumably kidding but the girls never did get to go on adventures. Apparently they couldn't handle stress. When Wesley was hurt, "A young girl who pressed her way...to get a glimpse of him, shrieked and rushed away. And seeing her, other women who hovered about turned away, afraid to look and panting visibly." (LA SALLE, p. 164) "If you wish to see loyalty carried to the point of prejudice you have to observe the young ladies." (LA SALLE, p. 216) And, "A girl does not have to have a reason; that she can do very well without one." (LA SALLE, p. 223) We can only be thankful that Fitzhugh is generally so busy telling a rollicking good story that his prejudices are more or less hidden by the

action and adventures. This unfortunately is not true in the final two non-G&D books.

THE BOYS' BOOK OF SCOUTS, published by Crowell, appeared in 1917, the same year that the BSA/G&D second and third TOM SLADES appeared. If the boy readers expected Boy Scouts they were mistaken. The book was a collection of 20 biographies of American frontier scouts, ranging from such obscure frontiersmen as Rube Stevens and Belzy Dodd to Sam Houston and General George Custer. One of the scouts represented was "Joseph, the Nez Perce," an Indian whom Fitzhugh came close to admiring. "Most of these men possessed all the qualities of heroism. They were models of physical manhood, strong of will and muscle, romantic in attire and capable of enduring incredible hardships and privations." (p. v) The stories were also flowery, romantic and dramatic and not, in the light of modern history, well researched. Since the stories referred to frontier life, Indians played a prominent part and the references to them are generally unfavorable. "Savages made the nights horrible with their war-whoops and murderous raids." (p. 147) Referring to the Cherokees, "The pride and power of this warlike tribe was at last broken and their murderous depredations were at an end." (p. 148) "...occurred the most frightful outbreak of the warlike and treacherous Sioux." (p. 93) And on and on. Joseph, chief of the Nez Perce, was selected for a chapter partly because, "as Indians go, he was a good Indian." (p. 238) Custer, of course, was a hero. In fairness to Fitzhugh I should note that he admitted that the government did not always treat the Indians fairly and that the Indians had some justification for their actions. When the Nez Perce were ordered to go to the reservation it was "a stinging disgrace to our Government. It is gratifying to know that they rebelled against this ultimatum." (p. 243) However, of course, Chief Joseph lost. "It has been always so with the red man; his prowess has brought him only humiliation in the end; his brilliant triumphs have marked the inevitable pathway to defeat." (p. 247) Fitzhugh's comments were often intemperate as in "The massacre at the sadly famous Alamo was only one of his [Santa Anna's] vile deeds" and "...Santa Anna had glutted himself with a still more inhuman massacre at Goliad." (p. 44) and most of Fitzhugh's villains get the same treatment. Fitzhugh is consistent in his attitudes towards blacks when he mentions the "negro servant of Captain Clark, who, in his appropriate character of minstrel and comedian, greatly enlivened the party." (p. 175) Just plain girls apparently had little to do with frontier scouting. "Squaws and Indian maidens" are mentioned as is "the tender regard of Indian damsels" (pp. 268, 269) and we are told "the maidens of the neighborhood jeered at him" [Davy Crockett]. The Cheyenne women joined "in the combat and fighting with the aggressive energy of modern suffragists." (p. 295) In this book Fitzhugh essentially simply ignored girls.

Fitzhugh's final non-G&D book was the 1919 history, FROM APPOMATTOX TO GERMANY, published by Harpers. Few scholars have read this book which is probably fortunate for Fitzhugh's reputation. It is a pretentious book and copiously illustrated. It purports to be a history for "younger readers" of the period from the Civil War to World War I. As an example of jingoism, bigotry, prejudice and poor historical writing is in a class by itself. If Fitzhugh had attempted to make a conscious display of his attitudes and prejudices he couldn't have done a better job. Discussing Reconstruction, "They [the Blacks] were the chief problem in that perplexing time, and before they were gotten into their proper places they caused a reign of terror throughout the South." (pp. 6,7) When Andrew Johnson became president, "If the country had been searched from end to end, it would have been difficult to find a man less fitted for this perplexing



task." (p. 11) Why? Because Johnson came from the "poor whites—the descendants of the early immigrants who had not the means or the brains or the energy to become planters." (p. 13) "The [Ku-Klux] Klansmen were men of dauntless courage and of iron nerve, and they were moved by a towering resolve. They were often hasty, often mistaken, and sometimes cruel. But they were so much better than the carpet-baggers that they seemed like angels by comparison." (p. 46)

The book contains four chapters on "Subduing the Red Men." I quote from what Fitzhugh probably thought was a fair and accurate description of the Custer episode. "Down there among the warriors on that great plain was a skilful and educated Indian known as Sitting Bull. He was cautious and wily—one of the ablest leaders, one of the most commanding spirits that had ever arisen among the race of red men. Forth to this great encampment rode the gallant Custer with his little band." (p. 83) "When the carnage of that dreadful massacre was over not a single white man lived to tell the tale. Doubtless many of them had been tortured and murdered after they were captured, for their bodies were horribly mutilated." (p. 83) "The career of Sitting Bull was not ended. He was yet to show that he was ingenious in many ways and that slaughtering was by no means his only accomplishment." (p. 84)

Fitzhugh devoted 16 chapters to the Spanish American War. It was a glorious war but apparently to Fitzhugh all wars were glorious. "Seldom had such rapid and enthusiastic recruiting been known. Many who were turned away returned to renew their pleas for acceptance in the growing host, and the shadow which overhung the busy camps was not the shadow of death, but the haunting fear that even in the eleventh hour Uncle Sam might yet cheat his restless soldiers out of the opportunity of dying for him." (p. 214) Of course the Spanish were villains as was Aguinaldo, the Philippine patriot. The other stereotypes of the earlier books were all included in APPOMATTOX in even greater detail.

Here, then, are the "Unknown Books of Percy Keese Fitzhugh." We can summarize them by repeating some of our earlier comments. Fitzhugh was a fine storyteller. He was a fluent writer—exciting, dramatic and colorful. He attempted to make all his books entertaining and never let historical facts interfere with a good story. He loved Uncle Sam, believed in "Manifest Destiny," and considered himself a true patriot. To him, all of our wars were "glorious struggles." His most successful books were quite well plotted with lots of more-or-less plausible action. Almost all of Fitzhugh's early books are badly marred by his attitudes towards girls, non-whites and foreigners. Some of these attitudes were typical of the times but some were extreme for any time. Unfortunately, they were carried over into the millions of copies of his later Boy Scout books. Fitzhugh was an entertaining writer and is still fun to read—after you sift out the prejudices and bigotry.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Murray, William D., *THE HISTORY OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA*. New York: Boy Scouts of America, 1937, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> "For it was Indeed He," *Fortune*, April, 1934.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, David D., "The Boy Scout Books and America in Transition," *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 8, Spring, 1975.

<sup>4</sup> Chenu, J. Robert, "Tom Slade—and Friends, Part II," *Yelloback Library*, Vol. 1, No. 5, September-October, 1981.

<sup>5</sup> Dizer, John T., *TOW SWIFT & COMPANY*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1982.

## Chapter III, "Fortune and the Syndicate."

<sup>6</sup> Dizer, John T., "The Boy Scouts Versus the Series Books—Part III," *Dime Novel Round-Up*, Vol. 62, No. 1, April, 1993.

<sup>7</sup> Holsinger, M. Paul, "From Fantasy to Realism: Boy Scouting in the Juvenile Series of G. Harvey Ralphson and Percy Keese Fitzhugh," Paper presented to the Popular Culture Association, March 25, 1987.

<sup>8</sup> Holsinger, M. Paul, "A Bully Bunch of Books: Boy Scout Books in American Youth Fiction, 1910-1930," *Childrens Literature Association Quarterly*, Vol. 14, Winter, 1989.

<sup>9</sup> O'Gara, Gil, "Tom Slade—and Friends, Part I," *Yellowback Library*, Vol. 1 No. 4, July-August, 1981.

<sup>10</sup> Prager, Arthur, *RASCALS AT LARGE*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1971. Chapter six, Beating the Boche.

<sup>11</sup> Soderbergh, Peter A., "The Great Book War: Edward Stratemeyer and the Boy Scouts of America, 1910-1930," *New Jersey History*, Vol. XCI, No. 4, Winter, 1973.

<sup>12</sup> Sullivan, John F., "The Do Good Boys and the Grave Peril," *Boys Book Collector* Vol. 3, No. 2, Spring, 1972. Reprinted in *Uphill Racer*, No. 35, March, 1980.

<sup>13</sup> Sullivan, John F., "PFK," *Yellowback Library*, Summer Special, 1986.

<sup>14</sup> Sullivan, John F., "King Time," *Yellowback Library*, No. 59, May, 1989.

<sup>15</sup> Sullivan, "PFK," p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> Fitzhugh, Percy K., *ALONG THE MOHAWK TRAIL*. New York: Crowell, 1912, p. 135.

<sup>17</sup> Fitzhugh, Percy K., *THE BOYS' BOOK OF SCOUTS*. New York: Crowell, 1917, p. 126.

<sup>18</sup> O'Gara, Gil, letter in *Yellowback Library*, No. 52, October, 1988.

## EARLY AND NON-GROSSET &amp; DUNLAP BOOKS BY PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

- |          |  |            |
|----------|--|------------|
| 1. ----  | Golden Rod Story Book. Details unknown.  |            |
| 2. 1906  | The Story of John Paul Jones.            | McLoughlin |
| 3. 1906  | The Story of Ethan Allen.                | McLoughlin |
| 4. 1906  | The Story of General Francis Marion.     | McLoughlin |
| 5. 1906  | The Story of General Richard Montgomery. | McLoughlin |
| 6. 1906  | The Story of General Johann DeKalb.      | McLoughlin |
| 7. 1906  | The Story of Anthony Wayne.              | McLoughlin |
| 8. 1907  | The Story of a Fight.                    | McLoughlin |
| 9. 1908  | The Galleon Treasure.                    | Crowell    |
| 10. 1908 | King Time.                               | Caldwell   |
| 1910     | Every Girl's Library (10 vols., Editor). | Pearson    |
| 11. 1912 | Along the Mohawk Trail.                  | Crowell    |
| 12. 1913 | For Uncle Sam, Boss.                     | Crowell    |
| 13. 1914 | In the Path of La Salle.                 | Crowell    |
| 14. 1916 | Uncle Sam's Outdoor Magic.               | Harpers    |
| 15. 1917 | The Boys' Book of Scouts.                | Crowell    |
| 16. 1919 | From Appomattox to Germany.              | Harpers    |



## DON STURDY, DID HE EVER STAY HOME?\*

By John Musemeche

*Dedicated to Thibaut Corday and his great friend and my dad,  
Rocco Musemeche.*

Ever wonder who bought the tickets for Don Sturdy? Who checked on the toothbrushes, packed the bags, made sure he had clean underwear when Victor Appleton sent him off to who knew where next?

When you're a hero you don't bother with such details.

And, Don Sturdy is a hero who never stayed home.

Let somebody else call Delta. Don has some lost ships to find. Somehow fresh Fruit of the Looms are trivial to his getting captured by headhunters. A real love life? What girl stands a realistic chance of getting her tentacles on Don when he's just whipped up on a giant octopus?

It's not true Don Sturdy did all that traveling to earn free frequent flier tickets for his uncles. No, he did it to earn some tidy sums as another cog in the money machine that was the Stratemeyer Syndicate. Don Sturdy fit the formula for juvenile book success.

Don Sturdy. Mention the name and one thinks of fun and adventure in locales around the world. Don Sturdy, a travel agent's dream client, a guy who always traveled with a "Brick," a guy whose exotic experiences around the globe provided enough fodder for a 15-book salvo that exploded on an American reading public looking for a break from the humdrum of the Great Depression.

While the ROVER BOYS, particularly early on, are school based and TOM SWIFT's scientific prowess provides his plots, geography is the key to Sturdy. He never stays home, taking exactly 25 chapters in each book to hopscotch the world.

Don travels with his uncles—Frank Sturdy, the noted big game hunter and marksman, and Professor Amos Regor Bruce, the archaeologist. Also making the trips is the red haired "Brick" Allison, Don's best buddy who is "all wool and a yard wide."

Sturdy's adventures take him to Egypt, Algeria, Brazil, Alaska, Borneo, Norway, the Arctic Circle, Patagonia, Kenya, Central Asia, Central America, and the Sargasso Sea. Along with a full regiment of knaves and other assorted villains Don tangles with lions, anacondas, leopards, that giant octopus, sharks, gorillas, elephants, bears, a rhino or two, a rather large whale, and his girl friend, Emily Turner.

Sturdy commands the juvenile readers' attention with a trip to the North Pole, a sojourn with headhunters, or by hotfooting it through the land of volcanoes. Along with JERRY TODD and POPPY OTT and some guy named TARZAN, DON STURDY is among the list of top juvenile boys series from 1925 to 1935.

Oh, he doesn't make all the stops. Somehow Appleton keeps Sturdy off the Great Wall of China, out of India, and away from Australia. He doesn't kiss the Blarney Stone in Ireland or go boating on the Grand Canal in Venice. Of course, he doesn't visit Disney World. But Sturdy doesn't miss much and a literal legion of faithful readers use his exploits and their imagination to create their own mental version of what would pass for public television programming today.

Few bookstores could resist stocking a series with such titles as DESERT OF MYSTERY, or BIG SNAKE HUNTERS. How about the TOMBS OF GOLD or THE PORT OF LOST SHIPS or IN THE LAND OF GIANTS? As mentioned previously Sturdy also took his readers ACROSS THE NORTH POLE and through THE LAND OF

\*Paper presented at ACA conference, April 7-10, 1993, New Orleans, LA.

VOLCANOES before spending some time AMONG THE GORILLAS and IN LION LAND and then submarining ON THE OCEAN BOTTOM.

Adding to Sturdy's appeal are Walter Rogers' exquisite dust cover illustrations on the first eleven novels. The final four books are illustrated by Nat Falk. Falk shows Don in the TEMPLES OF FEAR and LOST IN GLACIER BAY. Sturdy survives being TRAPPED IN THE FLAMING WILDERNESS before ending the series with a whale of a tale as he joins the HARPOON HUNTERS.

Appleton (who knows which of the "hacks" Jack Dizer mentions in his book about TOM SWIFT and the Stratemeyer Syndicate is the actual author?), becomes "Strangely" repetitive in his subtitles. It's the "Strange Cruise of the Phantom" in the OCEAN BOTTOM book, the "Strange Cruise of the Whaling Ship" in HARPOON HUNTERS, "Strange Clearing in the Jungle" in LION LAND, and finally "Destined for a Strange Sacrifice" in TEMPLES OF FEAR. Then the subtitles become "Adrift"—"Adrift in the Sargasso Sea" in PORT OF LOST SHIPS, "Adrift in the Great Jungle" when Don checks out GORILLAS, and "Adrift in the Wilds of Borneo" when Don, who should have visited a shrink for even thinking about this trip, gets CAPTURED BY HEAD-UNTERS.

Don is pretty much a one-dimensional character, a full time worker in the hero business. Appleton could have hacked out a more rounded personality but that may not have fit the book hero formula.

Don takes off from his home in Hillville to travel round the world. But he never negotiates the 50 miles to New York City for a concert, or to enjoy a fine meal, or even take in a football game. Don likes to fish but it's normally occasioned by being stuck on some raft trying to survive a boat wreck. Even his true love, Emily of the sparkling blue eyes and wavy brown hair, first gets his attention because our hero plucks her from a car being carried away in a rain swollen stream.

The presence of gum-smacking Jennie Jenks gives some comic relief. Jenks is the Sturdy household maid—a soft touch, no doubt since Sturdy is always gone. With her ever-present gum getting a workout Jennie is constantly berating Don about taking care of himself. She once bashes Don verbally while chewing her wad of gum and carrying a mouthful of wooden clothespins in her mouth at the same time. That's talent. Perhaps her role could have been expanded to help round out Don's personality—if Appleton wanted to.

But Appleton doesn't want an all around, All American boy. He wants a clean cut hero. He gets him in Don Sturdy.

Keep those bags packed, Don.

\* \* \* \* \*

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## BOOKS AND PULPS: OUR BETTER SENSE OF VALUES

By Rocco Musemeche

A metropolitan newspaper features a once a week column written by a friend who allows nostalgia to occasionally interfere with the hurly burly pace of today. In one of his more recent gems, for he does exercise great talent, our friend gave impetus to thoughts on why not reread a few of the old pulps and juvenile boy series books bestowing guilt as they stare down from various commanding positions. Some of these books hint much like Friday leaving prints behind for us modern Robinson Crusoes to ponder and select a tome or two.

So why not let the classics of our yesteryear rise like Lazarus to savor, to delight the almost lost, never-forgotten world of stories playing a part in who and what we are? Why not a sort of throwback to our best reads, our introductory fling into the printed word world?

A backward survey then to the bookshelves lined on the wall above the bed; the bookcase in yonder corner; the dresser drawers crammed with pulps and the heavy carton boxes made heavier with a load of more pulp prizes.

Go back to gently fondle dust-jackets and magazine covers where age diminished original colors but fails to erase the still familiar artwork of the first artists we came to know. To marvel at the silent yet eloquent suggestion to action they conveyed.

So with idle hours ahead in raising aloft to sublime heights the rereading of boyhood epics of our own choice, a private poll of goodies. To delve once more, absorb and embrace from a scattering gathered among a host of books and magazines stored lovingly nearby.

But first one must seek two of the most imperative needs of them all in preparing to experience the reading bliss to come. First is solitude. One must enter that zone of non-disturbance so peculiarly in kinship with readers the world over, an isolation which paradoxically may occur in the midst of the noonday rush while the second requisite is a comfortable position, be it the upright chair at kitchen table, lying prone in hammock or parlor sofa, grandpa's favorite armchair, or as in my case, flopped against a propped pillow with light streaming from the bedside lamp on a fully opened book. It's been that way for 64 years.

I've just plucked TOM SWIFT CIRCLING THE GLOBE over TOM SWIFT IN THE CITY OF GOLD, two downright adventuresome goodies, either one to bring up memories since they were purchased from the bookrack next to the sweet smelling soda fountain in Kahn's Drug Store. Happy recall indeed, for I bought my first ROY BLAKELY there as well as TARZAN AND THE JEWELS OF OPAR. Sure I remember it, for I left the girlfriend I dated at the time for the love of La, the high priestess of Opar. Remember La? I somehow associated La with the perfume counter at Kahn's. That's how strong an impression Edgar Rice Burroughs could project. What an author. And yes, the blank space over there marks the spot where TOM SWIFT AND HIS GIANT MAGNET will occupy whenever I can run down a dust-jacketed copy. Only missing one in the set, darn it!

My eyes go over the HAL KEEN, complete of course, but they are survivors from Custer's Last Stand I am willing to wager. But, never mind, let's go a piece down to the Oakdale Series and one more naked series, DICK HAMILTON. Over there in dust-jacketed splendor is the DON STURDY representation right next to THE ROVER BOYS, while right above in those Bert Salg jackets are my JERRY TODD and POPPY OTT collections. Another empty spot? Oh, that's the MOTOR BOYS ON ROAD AND RIVER, by Clarence Young, the only elusive one in the set. In the box in the corner (and I

am gloating) is the ahem, complete set of PEE-WEE HARRIS, yes with the hard to get TURNS DETECTIVE.

Say, I've just had an exciting idea, or call it an urge. Me thinks after CIRCLING THE GLOBE the next read will be THE RETURN OF TARZAN, you know the one I remember as the nimble change of pace plus the color and excitement of a myriad selection of J. Allen St. John illustrations, more than in any other book. This brings to mind the only writer, in my opinion, who held his own against Burroughs: Otis Adelbert Kline, whose quality while strong fell short to Burroughs' broad output.

I am now thumbing cautiously through browning pages of my pulp collection, some dangerously brittle like those full page New York newspapers featuring Theodore Roscoe's true mystery stories. The one I probe for is now in my hands, the unforgettable UNKNOWN ISLAND, by Fred MacIsaac, and next to it, that dandy hold-out for the solution in the last paragraph, THE GRAPEVINE MURDERS, by George F. Worts. Ditto that super, GOLD SKULL MURDERS, by Frank L. Packard, and his PURPLE BALL, and THE HIDDEN DOOR. Stories like these are not written anymore. Sad.

Here is THE BRASS COMMANDMENTS, by Charles Alden Seltzer, the smoothest western story writer of them all. Riding with Seltzer is not to be jarred, so effortless is his writing style.

Even though I have a pretty strong Ted Roscoe collection, this is not saying I have read them all. Some have been given a two or three time read like Z IS FOR ZOMBIE, that ice water down the spine thriller running amuck in a voodoo haunted Haitian chateau, and that war based REMEMBER TOMORROW, guaranteed to have you turning its pages into the night, both of these brimming over with the usual vitamin-enriched paragraphs.

The pulps, hidden from the prying fingers of grandkids and protected in plastic sheets, are mostly George F. Worts, Fred MacIsaac and Frank L. Packard serials and short stories. The Thibaut Corday yarns are still my favorites and always counted on to break a humdrum passage of time or taken to introduce Roscoe to readers who missed out on them. People with jaded reading appetites or those with stale or impaired reading habits usually respond with renewed interest when given a Xeroxed copy of the old legionnaire's exploits.

Can't help but get nostalgic whenever I permit my gaze to linger overlong upon my collection. Memories rise and long departed folks come to mind. Old bookstores where copies came from are given a respectable salute. Places like Old Doughtys', in Maine, and Ralph Cummings, someplace up East, are warmly remembered among the many others. Oh yes, Richard Minter, and Norm Hopper, who recently passed away, and such stalwarts as Edria Bennett and Bob Chenu. Cannot leave out John Nitka who practically started me off in collecting, and The Old Trading Post up there in pretty New Hampshire. Scores of others from each of whom I managed to keep filed-away correspondence.

All this prompts a contact with reading pal Joe Ruttar, of Philadelphia, inquiring just how is he getting along with that sequel to PERRY LANE AND THE SECRET OF THE PYRAMID, that very much look-alike to the Leo Edwards books we have seen so far.

Books and Pulps have a way of getting to Our Better Sense of Values in more ways than one.

\* \* \* \* \*

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## LETTERS

You are to be commended for maintaining so fascinating and informative a magazine for so many years. The colorful era of the dime novel would be dead indeed if it were not for your efforts and the faithful little band of researchers that gather around you. It is fortunate that a number of libraries are on your subscription list, so that the information you dispense will be preserved and made available for future generations of researchers.

Sam Moskowitz  
361 Roseville Ave.  
Newark, NJ 07107

\* \* \*

Enclosed is my magnificent check to renew my subscription. The article in the latest issue on Leo Edwards and Bert Salg [June, 1993] was right down my alley. When I was a kid we collected copper and brass and would go to an empty lot where we would burn the insulation off the copper wire (we always carried a magnet to test the copper) and then when we had collected piles of newspapers we would signal the local junk dealer (the first and original "junkie") and sell him our accumulated loot.

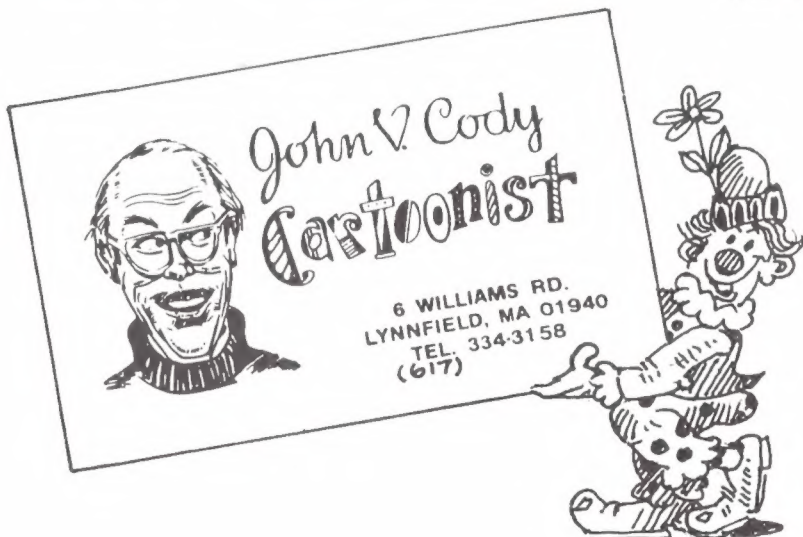
With the silver burning hot in my fevered little hands I would dash down to Jerry Costello's Book Store in Central Square, Lynn, MA, and snag as many JERRY TODDS and POPPY OTTS as I could buy at 60¢ a book, with gleaming pristine colored jackets!! Zowie!!

When I went into the Army, in 1942, I gave all of my boys' books to my 11 year old cousin. When I returned home, in 1945, I learned that there was a flood in my young cousin's cellar and all of the books were ruined!! Hoo boy!!

In the years since I've managed to collect the books of my youth all over again and I continue to enjoy them all thoroughly!!

Keep the good stuff coming, Ed!

John Cody



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